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Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2018 session of the Economic and Social Council on the annual theme "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities"

Ministerial declaration of the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, on the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies"

We, the Ministers and high representatives, having met at United Nations Headquarters in New York,

1. Reaffirm our commitment to effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[1] for all people everywhere, ensuring that no one is left behind;

2. Stress that the 2030 Agenda is people-centred, universal and transformative and that its Sustainable Development Goals are indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental;

3. Reaffirm all the principles recognized in the 2030 Agenda and emphasize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. We express concern that at the global level poverty remains a principal cause of hunger and that the number of undernourished people has increased since 2015, to an estimated 815 million in 2016. Ending hunger and achieving food security is fundamental for sustainable development. We stress the importance of taking collective and targeted measures to eradicate poverty;

4. Reaffirm our commitment to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,[2] which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, supports and complements it and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions. We welcome the third

[1] General Assembly resolution 70/1.
[2] General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

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Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up and take into account its intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations;[3]

5. Welcome the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, entitled "Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", and call for its full and early implementation in order to improve support to countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda;

6. Stress that, three years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, progress has been made across some of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, but it has not been at the pace required to achieve this ambitious agenda and has been uneven across countries and regions. We must urgently accelerate progress towards all targets, in particular those with a time frame of 2020;

7. Emphasize that the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, has a central role in overseeing the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the global level. We recall the ministerial declarations adopted by the forum in 2016[4] and 2017.[5] We look forward to the convening of the forum under the auspices of the Council in 2019 and the Assembly during its seventy-fourth session and recognize its importance for maintaining political momentum in support of the 2030 Agenda. We look forward to the quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report, which will inform the 2019 forum and strengthen the science-policy interface at all levels;

8. Take note of the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals;[6]

9. Welcome the preparatory work that has been undertaken by the Economic and Social Council, including its functional and regional commissions, under the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies" and recognize the contributions made by its segments and its forums. We recognize that the regional commissions provide useful opportunities for peer learning, reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion. We welcome the main outcomes of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.[7] We appreciate the input and expertise of all relevant thematic platforms and of all other stakeholders, as appropriate;

10. Commend the 46 countries[8] that presented voluntary national reviews at the 2018 high-level political forum and emphasize the importance of sharing best practice and making assistance available for building national capacities for follow-up and review. The reviews highlight the importance of effective and

[3] See E/FFDF/2018/3.
[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/71/3), chap. V, sect. F.
[5] Ibid., *Seventy-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/72/3), chap. VI, sect. E.
[6] E/2018/64.
[7] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-third Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/73/25), annex.
[8] Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

coordinated government, including at the subnational and local levels, as appropriate, as well as evidence-based policymaking and innovation-driven development underpinned by high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data. We encourage all countries to make use of the lessons learned from these reviews to enhance their domestic implementation and support for international implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and encourage all countries that have not yet done so to carry out a voluntary national review;

11. Stress that the commitment to leave no one behind is at the core of the 2030 Agenda and should be a guiding principle at all levels to shift the world onto a resilient and sustainable path. Leaving no one behind requires addressing the specific needs of people in vulnerable situations but also supporting their empowerment and participation in decision-making that affects their lives. Those whose needs are reflected in the 2030 Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 per cent live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons, migrants and people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies, and people in areas affected by terrorism and conflict;

12. Recognize that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights, including the right to development, on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions. Factors that give rise to violence, insecurity and injustice, such as inequality, corruption, poor governance and illicit financial and arms flows, are addressed in the 2030 Agenda. We must redouble our efforts to resolve or prevent conflict and to support post-conflict countries, including by ensuring that women have a role in peacebuilding and State-building. We call for further effective measures and actions to be taken, in conformity with international law, to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development as well as their environment;

13. Emphasize that universal respect for human rights and human dignity, peace, justice, equality and non-discrimination is central to our commitment to leaving no one behind. Our commitment also includes respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity, and equal opportunity, permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. We are committed to a world that invests in its children and youth and in which every child grows up free from all forms of violence and exploitation. We envision a world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed. We will strive for a world where young women and young men are key agents of change, supported by a culture of innovation, sustainability and inclusiveness, to enable a better future for themselves and their communities in a just, equitable, tolerant, open, creative and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met;

14. Emphasize our commitment to a world in which every country enjoys sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, leading to decent work for all. A world where innovation, industrialization and cooperation in productive capacity can accelerate economic growth. We affirm the need to enhance infrastructure connectivity with concrete actions and by maximizing synergies in infrastructure planning and development to achieve resilient societies;

15. Note that the 2030 Agenda is accepted by all countries and is applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. We recognize that the most vulnerable countries and, in particular, African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States deserve special attention, as do countries in situations of conflict and post-conflict. There are also serious challenges within many middle-income countries;

16. Reaffirm our commitment to achieving gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the full realization of the human rights of all women and girls. To achieve inclusive, sustainable and resilient societies, we call for the leadership and full, effective and equal participation of women in decision-making in the design, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience, and we recognize that unequal gender roles as reflected in women's disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work hold women back in the economy and other areas. We reiterate the urgency to ensure women's equal access to, and control over, land and natural resources. We reaffirm our commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and harmful practices. Our efforts will reinforce the linkages between Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the other Goals. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is crucial;

17. Recognize that developing the human capital required to build sustainable and resilient societies must begin with investing in all children, adolescents and youth, safeguarding their rights and ensuring that from early childhood they grow up in a safe environment, free from all forms of violence, including neglect, abuse and exploitation, and through the elimination of all harmful practices. In this regard, we note the Buenos Aires Declaration on Child Labour, Forced Labour and Youth Employment. As critical agents of change and torchbearers of the 2030 Agenda for current and future generations, we emphasize the importance of engaging and supporting the meaningful participation of children, adolescents and young people, particularly the most deprived and marginalized among them, in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and of enabling their empowerment through information, knowledge and awareness of sustainable development. We commit to including youth perspectives in the development and assessment of strategies and programmes designed to address their specific needs and to ensure that youth education, skills development and decent employment are prioritized;

18. Emphasize that high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable data and statistics are central to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We urge countries to further strengthen collaboration at the bilateral, regional and global levels for capacity-building and sharing of best practices for collecting, producing, disseminating, analysing and using quality data and statistics, disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. We welcome the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/313 of 6 July 2017 on the work of the Statistical Commission;

19. Stress that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its widespread, unprecedented impacts disproportionately burden the poorest and most vulnerable. We recognize that 2017 was one of the three warmest years on record and that the average temperature was 1.1 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. We recognize the need for an effective and progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge. We welcome

the Paris Agreement[9] and its early entry into force, encourage all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[10] that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible. We recognize the synergies between the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. We acknowledge the importance of continued support for and international cooperation on adaptation and mitigation efforts and on strengthening resilience. We stress the necessity of adequate and predictable financial resources from a variety of sources, including public and private ones. We highlight the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change;

20. Reaffirm the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030[11] and recognize that action towards sustainable and resilient societies requires a disaster risk-informed approach. We call for integrated strategies that encourage coherence in the implementation of the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda and augmented efforts to integrate disaster risk management into national, subnational and local sustainable development strategies and plans, as appropriate;

21. Commit to embracing diversity in cities and human settlements, to strengthening social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and understanding, tolerance, mutual respect, gender equality, innovation, entrepreneurship, inclusion, identity and safety, and the dignity of all people, as well as fostering liveability and a vibrant urban economy. We also commit ourselves to taking steps to ensure that our local institutions promote pluralism and peaceful coexistence within increasingly heterogeneous and multicultural societies;

22. Reiterate that while our 2018 review emphasizes Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17, the integrated, indivisible and universal nature of the Goals makes it essential that we pay particular attention to leveraging synergies and co-benefits across all dimensions of sustainable development, while avoiding or minimizing trade-offs;

23. Note with concern that 844 million people lack basic water services, 2.1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water on premises that is available when needed and free from contamination, 4.5 billion lack access to safely managed sanitation, and 892 million still practise open defecation. Water pollution is affecting, among other things, water quality, public health and the environment and decreasing water availability in a world that has lost 70 per cent of its wetlands over the last century. Water stress is above 70 per cent in some countries and regions. Insufficient financing continues to prevent countries from meeting national water, sanitation and hygiene targets. Creating multi-stakeholder partnerships and ensuring quality public participation and integrated water resources management at all levels are key to effectively tackling these issues. We aim to increase water use efficiency across all sectors and water resource allocation, and emphasize the need to address challenges of water scarcity. We commit to improving cooperation across borders, in transboundary waters. To achieve universal and sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation and to end open defecation, substantial long-term investment and capacity-building will be required, particularly in rapidly growing urban areas. Strengthening the institutional capacity of local, subnational and national authorities, as appropriate, to manage and regulate sanitation systems is a high priority. In

[9] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.
[10] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.
[11] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

particular, we must pay special attention to ensuring access to sanitation and hygiene facilities, taking into account the specific needs of women and girls for menstrual hygiene management and of persons with disabilities, without compromising their safety and dignity. Political leadership to raise awareness of the urgency of the matter, concrete actions and cooperation from all stakeholders are essential. We call upon the United Nations system to support countries in their efforts, according to national plans and priorities. We welcome the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, and take note of other water-related reports and panels and the outcomes of the major water conferences;[12]

24. Note with concern that more than 1 billion people currently live without electricity, which prevents meaningful economic growth and job generation. Three billion people lack access to clean-cooking solutions and are exposed to dangerous levels of indoor air pollution, which cause an estimated 3.8 million premature deaths per year, with women and children most at risk. We are encouraged that the transformation of the world's energy systems is being accelerated by advances in technology, rapid declines in the cost of renewable energy, deployment of least-cost decentralized solutions, policy support, new business models and sharing of best practices. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the International Solar Alliance as an international organization and note the continued work of the International Renewable Energy Agency. We emphasize the need for strengthened political will and increased levels of investment and action by all stakeholders to increase access, on mutually agreed terms, to clean energy research and technology. We commit to enhancing international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advances and cleaner fossil fuel technology, and to promoting investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology. We call upon Governments and all stakeholders to make clean-cooking solutions a priority and to close the electricity access gap by harnessing the potential of decentralized renewable energy solutions. We support solutions that are in line with people's needs and that support local economic activities such as the productive use of energy. We call upon Governments and other stakeholders to accelerate the pace of transition towards renewable energy, especially in end-use sectors such as transport, buildings, agriculture and industry, as well as the pace of energy efficiency across all sectors of the economy, including cooling and district heating. We reaffirm the commitment to rationalizing inefficient fossil fuel subsidies taking into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries. It is also critical that we scale up capacity-building, research and development, including by sharing experiences and data and promoting innovation and investments in energy efficiency across all sectors of the economy, and that we support sustainable energy deployment, particularly in developing countries;

25. Acknowledge that, owing to rapid urbanization, many cities and local authorities face challenges in providing adequate housing and resilient infrastructure to support their growing populations and are increasingly faced with the challenges of urban poverty, social exclusion and spatial inequality, overcrowding, conflict, crime and violence, vulnerability of infrastructure, poor basic service delivery, environmental degradation and pollution. Migratory and forced displacement flows

[12] The outcome document of the High-level Panel on Water, entitled "Making every drop count: an agenda for water action"; the UN-Water Sustainable Development Goal 6 synthesis report on water and sanitation; the Global High-level Panel on Water and Peace; the eighth World Water Forum, held in Brasilia from 18 to 23 March 2018; and the High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, convened jointly by the United Nations and Tajikistan in Dushanbe from 20 to 22 June 2018.

further exacerbate these urban challenges. The vulnerability of cities to epidemics, disasters and to the impacts of climate change has increased because of rapid population growth and unplanned urbanization. We note with concern the number of people living in slums has increased to 881 million globally. In many cities populations still breathe air that falls short of the World Health Organization air quality guidelines value for particulate matter, leading to higher rates of non-communicable diseases and increasing the risk of premature mortality. Minimizing and effectively managing solid waste continues to be a challenge in many regions, with significant and adverse effects from uncollected waste in cities, including direct and indirect effects on the health of residents and the environment. We stress that cities can act as agents of positive change, catalysts for inclusion and powerhouses of equitable and sustainable economic growth. We reaffirm our commitment to full, timely and effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda.[13] We will embrace innovation-driven development, digitalization and new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, in managing cities more effectively and holistically, including intelligent and resource-efficient transport systems and new efficiencies in energy consumption and waste management. We further stress the need for strengthening the technical and managerial capacity of local authorities and cities for developing and delivering integrated, multisectoral, sustainable and risk-informed urban planning policies. Building resilience should be affordable with reduced economic incentives for unsustainable development. We call for the strengthening of normative and regulatory frameworks for disaster risk reduction in urban areas, including improving and enforcing land-use plans and building codes, and support the development of early warning systems in order to increase resilience, in particular for the most vulnerable countries. We stress the importance of long-term and integrated urban and territorial planning and design, underlining that cities should not be developed in isolation from the surrounding peri-urban and rural areas and should adopt sustainable, people-centred, age- and gender-responsive and integrated approaches to urban and territorial development;

26. Note with concern that decoupling economic growth from resource use continues to be challenging. While an increasing number of countries have put in place national policies and initiatives related to sustainable consumption and production, including corporate social responsibility, efforts need to be scaled up. Resource efficiency must be increased taking a life-cycle approach, from reduction of the resources used in the extraction and production phases to reuse and recycling, including by deploying innovation in technology and standards, including on materials quality. We acknowledge the midterm review of and progress achieved in the implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns,[14] including the development of the One Planet network, which is an important implementation mechanism for Sustainable Development Goal 12. We will further accelerate action on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes. We call upon all stakeholders to adopt a sustainable food systems approach and to develop effective strategies and innovations to reduce food losses and waste. Resilient, sustainable and inclusive food systems that protect, enhance and restore natural resources, sustain rural and urban livelihoods and provide access to nutritious foods from smallholder producers must be at the heart of efforts to promote sustainable consumption and production. We underline the challenges related to plastic waste, especially in the oceans. We will encourage sustainable lifestyles by providing reliable sustainability information to consumers, increasing education and

[13] General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.
[14] A/CONF.216/5, annex.

awareness-raising and making it easier to rethink, reuse, recycle, recover and remake any products and services and prevent and reduce waste generation. We call for intensified efforts to achieve the targets for environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle by 2020 and beyond;

27. Emphasize that forests, wetlands, drylands and other natural ecosystems are essential for sustainable development, poverty alleviation and improved human well-being. We recognize that climate change, habitat loss, invasive alien species, overexploitation of natural resources, desertification, illegal logging, land-use change, illegal wildlife poaching, pollution and urbanization are global drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide. While protected areas in forest and terrestrial ecosystems are on the rise and deforestation has slowed, other facets of terrestrial conservation continue to need accelerated efforts to conserve ecosystems and biodiversity and improve land productivity. We acknowledge that the success of the biodiversity-related targets depends on action from all sectors, such as agriculture, livestock, forestry, fishing, tourism, urbanization, the manufacturing and processing industries, health, infrastructure, mining and energy development, and cannot be achieved without mainstreaming biodiversity across these sectors and without its being included in national plans and local strategies. We commit to the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halting deforestation, restoring degraded forests and substantially increasing afforestation and reforestation globally by 2020. We will step up efforts on all fronts to tackle desertification, land degradation, erosion and drought, biodiversity loss and water scarcity, which are seen as major environmental, economic and social challenges for global sustainable development. We urge Governments, the private sector and civil society to scale up integrated landscape management approaches to land-use planning and decision-making within and across jurisdictions in a participatory and transparent way. We will increase efforts to facilitate investment in gender-responsive programmes that address problems of deforestation, land degradation, desertification, drought, sand and dust storms, biodiversity loss and water scarcity, including through implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030,[15] the United Nations forest instrument[16] and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,[17] and scaled-up support by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. We will improve monitoring and reporting, including use of information and communications technology and remote sensing to tackle, in particular, illegal logging and wildlife trafficking, including poaching. We call upon all United Nations Member States and observers to implement the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa[18] as a framework to achieve a land degradation-neutral world;

28. Recognize that a strengthening of the means of implementation and a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development is required to achieve the ambitious 2030 Agenda. While the upturn of the world economy has underpinned progress across all action areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, it remains vulnerable to financial and economic volatility and gains have not been equitable across countries and regions. We will take concrete and immediate action to create the necessary enabling environment at all levels for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. We devote ourselves collectively to the pursuit of global sustainable development and of mutually beneficial cooperation, which can bring meaningful

[15] See General Assembly resolution 71/285.
[16] See General Assembly resolutions 62/98 and 70/199.
[17] United Nations Environment Programme, document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/2, annex.
[18] ICCD/COP(13)/21/Add.1, decision 7/COP.13, annex.

gains to all countries and all parts of the world. We note progress in domestic resource mobilization, underscored by the principle of national ownership, but emphasize that large gaps in mobilization remain between many least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries and developed countries. We recognize the importance of fiscal management to enhance domestic resource mobilization and encourage that it be made a priority for all types of development cooperation, including official development assistance and technical support. Efforts in international tax cooperation should be universal in approach and scope and fully take into account the needs and capacities of all countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African countries. We note that the momentum around sustainable investment and finance, including impact investment, is growing, and we invite private companies to adopt sustainable practices that foster long-term value. We emphasize that a reallocation of a small percentage of assets under management towards long-term quality investment in sustainable development could make a significant contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We are encouraged by those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitment to 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, and call upon all official development assistance providers to fulfil their respective commitments. We welcome continued efforts to improve the quality, effectiveness and impact of development cooperation and other international efforts in public finance, including adherence to agreed development cooperation effectiveness principles. We welcome the contribution of South-South cooperation to poverty eradication and sustainable development. We reaffirm that South-South cooperation is an important element of international cooperation for development as a complement to, and not a substitute for, North-South cooperation. We recognize that it is also critical that disaster risk reduction measures, with due consideration to prevention, are incorporated into development assistance programmes and infrastructure financing, as appropriate, in line with the Sendai Framework. We will continue to promote a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, as well as meaningful trade liberalization. We note with concern that emerging debt challenges in developing countries have intensified, adding to the challenges of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We call for greater transparency, on the side of both debtors and creditors. Building capacity, strengthening policy frameworks and enhancing information-sharing could help to avoid new episodes of debt distress. We recognize the need to assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management, as appropriate. We will continue to strengthen international coordination and policy coherence to enhance global financial and macroeconomic stability and will also work to prevent and reduce the risk and impact of financial crises. We welcome progress in reforming international financial regulations and commit to implementing negotiated reforms while being watchful of unintended consequences and the need to balance the goals of access to credit with financial stability. We recognize that the international system's overall financial response to disasters is insufficient and that better ex ante disaster risk reduction and resilience-building mechanisms and quick-disbursing ex post instruments are required. We welcome the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries in Turkey, by which the first Sustainable Development Goal target, target 17.8, has been achieved, and the progress made towards operationalization of

the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, and encourage all development partners to provide financial and technical assistance to ensure their full and effective implementation;

29. Stress the critical role of science, technology and innovation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We acknowledge the positive transformative potential of technology, both existing and emerging, as well as its challenges and risks, which should be addressed by appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks and international cooperation, working with the private sector, academia, research institutions and other stakeholders. A substantial digital divide persists, both between and within countries and between women and men, and between girls and boys. We stress the need to act proactively to avoid exacerbating inequalities between and within countries in the coming years and that the introduction of new technologies should never blind us to our pledge to leave no one behind;

30. Endeavour to take continual, concrete and immediate steps to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships. These partnerships will be important to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries. We underline that policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development require engagement by all stakeholders and that they are key to building sustainable and resilient societies and for the achievement of sustainable development at all levels. In this regard, we recognize the role of the private sector as a critical development partner and as a leading enabler for achieving the Goals. The private sector can create decent jobs, promote innovative solutions for development challenges, improve skill sets in alignment with new technological breakthroughs and provide affordable goods and services for infrastructure and energy problems;

31. Pledge to step up our efforts and take the bold actions needed to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and build sustainable and resilient societies everywhere, reaching the furthest behind first and ensuring that no one is left behind.

49th plenary meeting
19 July 2018